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AF  
b(1)

The search for convincing collateral evidence has not been successful.

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Accurate assessment of Event 747 was made difficult by both intelligence collection and policy factors. Insufficient attention had been paid to the background against which signals were collected. This was true both for the technical community, which never fully analyzed non-nuclear Vela signals, and for the intelligence community, which failed to monitor South African maritime activities closely enough to confidently assess the nature of the activity observed around September 22nd. The matter was overclassified at the start, keeping some valuable research assets unused, and underclassified later on, causing the technical debate to take place in public and reducing the credibility of the findings. The use of an outside panel brought new prejudices and politics to the problem that may not have been fully understood by those involved and tended to polarize those within the community whose objectivity was then questioned. The lack of strong, authoritative central direction on proliferation intelligence prevented quiet, effective marshalling of all available assets and permitted the politicization of the analysis. Finally, the reaction of the policy community to a potentially uncomfortable set of findings generated reduced trust in intelligence professionals and resulted in a report by outsiders with less credibility in foreign and domestic opinion. (C)

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